



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 6102.0 - Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2001

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### INTRODUCTION

21.1 In recent years there has been increasing demand for information on the diversity of working arrangements in the Australian labour market, and on superannuation. The Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation (SEAS) was conducted from April to June 2000, in a sample of households across Australia, in order to provide information that will inform the debate in these areas. It is planned to conduct the survey again in 2005.

21.2 The aims of the SEAS were to describe:

- the diversity of working arrangements in the Australian workforce; and
- people's superannuation arrangements.

21.3 SEAS focused on those characteristics of employment considered important in distinguishing newer and emerging working arrangements from the prevalent, but declining, full-time ongoing job with regular hours and paid leave entitlements. These characteristics include:

- nature of employment (e.g. wage and salary earner, in own business, working on a fixed term contract);
- job duration and expected future job duration;
- access to paid leave;
- number of hours worked, and preferred hours, indicating overwork and underemployment;
- regularity of hours worked, and whether any hours were worked on weekends or in the evening or over night;
- working arrangements such as multiple jobholding, shiftwork, work done at home;
- earnings (amount and whether they vary); and
- preferred work patterns.

21.4 The focus of the superannuation section of the survey was on:

- the type of superannuation coverage that people had (e.g. employer or personal contributions, or both);
- how much people and their employers were contributing to superannuation, and how much money people had accrued in superannuation;

- reasons for not making personal contributions to superannuation; and
- the amount of any lump sums recently received from superannuation, and how the lump sum was used.

## SURVEY OUTPUT

21.5 First results from SEAS were released in **Employment Arrangements and Superannuation, Australia** (Cat. no. 6361.0), in March 2001. This publication builds on work done as part of the supplement to the Labour Force Survey, the Forms of Employment Survey, published in **Forms of Employment, Australia**, (Cat. no. 6359.0), to identify major employment categories in the Australian workforce. It also contains a wide range of information considered important in describing newer and emerging forms of working arrangements, and some information about superannuation coverage.

21.6 Financial superannuation information, including the amount being contributed to superannuation and the amount of superannuation accrued, was supplemented over an extended period by data provided by superannuation funds and administrators. Funds and administrators provided information only for those individual respondents who authorised them to do so. This information will be released for the first time in **Superannuation: Coverage and Financial Characteristics, Australia** (Cat. no. 6360.0) later in 2001.

21.7 The main population of interest is employed persons. Estimates are produced on an original basis only (i.e. not seasonally adjusted) and include:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Socio-demographic information                                     | Sex, age, marital status, relationship in household, family, geographic region, housing tenure, educational attainment, birthplace and year of arrival in Australia.   |
| Labour force data   | Labour force status.   |
| People employed   | Whether multiple job holder, status in employment, employment type, whether working on a casual basis (employees only), whether working on a contract basis (owner managers only), occupation, industry, time in job or business, whether job has a set finishing date, hours usually worked, hours worked at home, extra hours and overtime worked, preferred working hours, working patterns, preferred working patterns, paid leave entitlements, workplace injuries or illnesses sustained, training, work done at home, shiftwork, whether on call or stand-by, and whether paid by an employment agency. |
| People not currently working who had worked in the last 12 months | Some details of last job held.   |
| Superannuation  | Whether contributing to superannuation or drawing on superannuation; number of superannuation accounts and types of accounts; type of contributions, including personal, employer, spouse; amount being contributed, and amount accrued in superannuation; for those not making personal contributions, reasons for not personally contributing; and whether received a lump sum recently, and if 'yes' how the lump sum was used.   |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Income | Earnings for each job (up to two jobs); annual income; main source of income; and all sources of income. |
|--------|--|

21.8 Most data relate to individual persons. Some data are also available for households, families and income units.

## SCOPE

21.9 The SEAS covered persons aged 15-69 years who were usual residents of private dwellings in Australia, excluding:

- overseas residents in Australia;
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from the Census and estimated resident population counts;
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia;
- persons visiting private dwellings;
- persons living in remote and sparsely settled areas; and
- persons living in special dwellings.

21.10 Usual residents of selected private dwellings were included in the survey unless they were going to be absent from the dwelling until the end of the enumeration period. The exclusion of persons living in remote and sparsely settled areas has only a minor impact on any aggregate estimates that are produced for individual States and Territories, except the Northern Territory.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

21.11 Most information was obtained in the SEAS by personal interview.

21.12 To maximise the quality of the superannuation data obtained from the survey, respondents were asked to refer to a relevant record (payslip and/or superannuation statement) to report amounts contributed to superannuation, and amounts accrued in superannuation. This information was supplemented by data provided by superannuation funds in cases where the respondent was unable to refer to the relevant record(s) and was willing to authorise their superannuation fund to provide the required information. For more information, refer to **Superannuation: Coverage and Financial Characteristics, Australia** (Cat. no. 6360.0) scheduled for release in the second half of 2001.

## SAMPLE DESIGN

21.13 A probability sample design was used. The sample was drawn from the Population Survey Master Sample and excluded special dwellings and remote and sparsely settled strata. See Chapter 17 for further information on sample design used in household surveys.

21.14 The initial sample contained approximately 18,000 private dwellings, or 14,000 after sample loss.

## **ESTIMATION METHODS**

21.15 Post-stratification estimation was used for person-level estimates. The post-stratification variables used to weight person-level estimates were:

- State;
- part of State;
- sex; and
- age.

21.16 Household, family and income unit estimates were also produced as part of SEAS. To obtain these estimates, weights for each household in the sample were calibrated with independent estimates of the number of households in Australia. The household benchmarks used to weight the number of households in the sample were:

- State;
- part of State; and
- household composition.

21.17 The benchmarks used for persons and households relate only to persons living in private dwellings, and therefore do not (and are not intended to) match estimates of the total Australian resident population obtained from other sources.

## **RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES**

21.18 Estimates from SEAS are subject to both sampling and non-sampling error (see Chapter 16 for more detail). The relative standard errors of survey estimates are included in each SEAS publication, and survey estimates with high relative standard errors are flagged with asterisks.

## **DATA COMPARABILITY OVER TIME**

21.19 The 2000 survey was the first SEAS collection. Some of the information collected as part of SEAS is very similar to that collected as part of the Forms of Employment Survey and, in some cases, similar data have been previously collected as part of the wider labour force supplementary survey program. However, allowances should be made for sampling variability, and for differences in scope and survey methodology.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

21.20 For further details contact the Assistant Director, Labour Market Section on Canberra (02) 6252 7437.

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